

1-(currently amended) A nucleus prosthesis for insertion in an ~~intervertebral~~ intervertebral cavity, the prosthesis characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that it comprises :

- a first and a second interlocking structural component, each made of a semi-rigid, deformable elastic material suitable for supporting a compressive load and in that, the second structural component inserts substantially within the confines of an envelope defined between surfaces of ~~into~~ the first structural component;

- insertion tubes ~~(23), (24), and (25)~~ which guide the first structural component (12) of the nucleus prosthesis (1) into the to-be-filled intervertebral cavity and, after insertion, hold the first structural member in place; and

- a rigid stem ~~(21)~~ connected to the first structural component (12) via a connection (124) , the rigid stem guiding the second structural component ~~(11)~~ through the tubes (23), ~~(24), and (25)~~ into engagement with a central cavity (121) of the first structural component (12) after insertion into the intervertebral cavity.

2-(currently amended) The nucleus prosthesis (1) according to claim 1 characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that:

- the first structural component ~~(12)~~ takes the form of a hollow sphere flattened at the poles and the central cavity (121) is accessible via a deformable opening (122) in the first structural component ; and

- the second structural component ~~(11)~~ is substantially a full sphere (111), which is able to pass through the deformable opening (122) into engagement with the central cavity (121), in order to form an elastic block which cannot be expelled from its housing when the prosthesis is subjected to imposed mechanical forces.

3-CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE

4- (currently amended) A The nucleus prosthesis according to claim 2 ~~one of the preceding claims~~ characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that the deformable opening (122) of the first structural component (12) cuts a sector through a thickness of the first structural component (12), the deformable opening (122) having a constriction (123) that prevents expulsion of the second structural component (11) after introduction of the second structural component (11).

5- CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

6- (currently amended) A The nucleus prosthesis according to claim 4 characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that the second structural component (11) comprises a fixation (116) allowing the passage of a screw for fixing on the bone in order to better ensure good anchoring of the prosthesis (1).

7- (currently amended) A The nucleus prosthesis according to claim 1 characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that the first structural member (12) comprises a thread (127f) for receiving the rigid stem (21) whose end has a corresponding thread, the aforementioned rigid stem (21) also allowing the withdrawal of the rigid stem (21) by simple unscrewing, once the prosthesis (1) is in place.

8- (currently amended) A The nucleus prosthesis according to claim 7 characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that the second structural component (11) has the shape of a champagne cork serving as a one way device comprising a deformable fully spherical head (111) and, optionally, as well as, if necessary, a slightly extending cylindrical body.

9- (currently amended) The nucleus prosthesis Device (3) for the installation of a nucleus prosthesis according to claim 8 characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that anchoring of a male part (11) in a female part is ensured by a one way shoulder (128m) which overlaps the male part (128m) and the female part (128f).

10- (currently amended) A The nucleus prosthesis according to claim 8 characterized ~~by the fact in~~ that a thickness of the second structural component (11) slightly exceeds a thickness of the first structural component (12) in order to, during dynamic stresses, initially compress the second structural component so as to better lock the second structural component into the central cavity.

11- (currently amended) A The nucleus prosthesis according to claim 1 ~~any preceding claims~~

1- to 8 characterized by the fact in that an insert in the first structural component makes it possible, by X ray inspection visualization, to check the stability of the prosthesis over time.

12- (currently amended) The nucleus prosthesis according to claim 11 wherein the insert is a cylindrical metal insert which is clearly distinguishable from the first and second structural components by X ray inspection visualization, the insert having a visible orientation when viewed by X ray wherein the orientation of the insert indicates the orientation of the prosthesis.

13- CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE

14-CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE

15-CANCEL WITHOUT PREJUDICE

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